

Petty Officer Knott will be remembered as a proud individual dedicated to serving his country. He joined the U.S. Navy in 2001 after graduating from Grand Island Senior High School and became a Navy Seabee so he could learn specialty welding and help others. Petty Officer Knott spent about 9 months in Iraq last year and was recently redeployed in August. He had just been promoted and was overseeing a three-person unit.

Petty Officer Knott is survived by his parents Randy Knott of Grand Island and Vera Thorpe of Hastings; step-mother, Teri Knott of Grand Island; step-father Steve Thorpe of Hastings; brothers William and Tim of Seward; sister Angela of Lincoln; and grandparents Lyle and Arlene Knott and Masel Anderson, all of Grand Island. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time. America is proud of Eric Knott's service and mourns his loss.

For his service, bravery, and sacrifice, I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Knott.

#### TRIBUTE TO INDIANAPOLIS POLICE OFFICER TIMOTHY LAIRD

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to and honor the remarkable life of Timothy "Jake" Laird, an Indianapolis police officer who was killed in the line of duty on August 18, 2004 by a gunman terrorizing an Indianapolis neighborhood.

During the early morning of August 18, Officer Laird left his own patrol area to come to the aid of fellow police officers in a nearby neighborhood who were facing a dangerous man armed with multiple assault weapons. Laird, a 4-year veteran of the Indianapolis Police Department, went out of his way to protect the citizens of Indianapolis by knowingly putting himself in danger, a selfless act that would cost him his life. Officer Laird, 31 years old, was the first Indianapolis police officer to die in the line of duty in 16 years.

Officer Laird graduated from Warren Central High School in 1991. After graduating from high school, he joined the Marines and married his high school sweetheart, Jennifer Lyn Reno, in 1992. Officer Laird served 8 years in the Marines before joining the Indianapolis Police Department in 2000, where he quickly distinguished himself as a confident, hardworking policeman who could be counted on by his fellow officers.

During his time with the Indianapolis Police Department, Officer Laird received two letters of commendation, though these respected symbols of official praise pale in comparison to the words his family and fellow officers used to describe his work. Those who knew him remember Officer Laird as a perfectionist who demanded the most of himself on the job but was the first to laugh at himself during lighter moments. He was known as the kind of of-

ficer that others wanted with them on patrol, and his willingness to put his life in danger to help another officer is the ultimate proof of the kind of man he was.

Officer Laird was a devoted family man who relished his time with loved ones. He leaves behind his wife, Jennifer; his daughter, Kaylee; his father, Tim Althouse; and his stepmother, Barb; his mother and stepfather, Debbie and Michael Laird; his two brothers, one sister and two step-brothers.

In the wake of his death, friends, neighbors and fellow officers came together to praise Officer Laird's bravery, selflessness and love for his family. According to his father, Jake had wanted to be a police officer ever since he was a little boy. Officer Laird was a role model not only for his family, but for all who knew him and whose lives he touched. He dedicated his life to the noblest of causes: his family, his job and keeping others safe. May his daughter grow up knowing that her father was a brave, hard-working and loving man.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Timothy "Jake" Laird into the United States CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. As Officer Laird rests with God in eternal peace, let us never forget the courage and sacrifice he displayed when he laid down his life on August 18, 2004.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

Scotty Joe Weaver, an 18-year-old gay Alabama man was beaten, stabbed, and his body burned in woods near his mobile home on July 18, 2004. Robert Porter, 18, Christopher Ryan Gaines, 20, and Gaines' girlfriend, Nichole Kelsay have been charged with the July 18 killing, which police believe was motivated by hate.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in support of this request for additional disaster assistance in the wake of Hurricanes Charley and Frances, and the devastation they have brought on the State of Florida. I, along with my Nebraska constituents, send our thoughts and prayers to those in Florida dealing with the physical and emotional impact of these hurricanes.

In Nebraska, we sympathize with the victims of natural disasters, whether they be caused by hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes. Presently, my State is facing its fifth straight year of record drought, which as you know has a damaging effect on the agricultural industry, as well the mainstreet of every Nebraska community. Multiple years of drought have cost our Nation billions of dollars in economic losses and has many farmers wondering whether they will be able to carry on. They are not in this position because of poor planning or some unfortunate weather incident but rather as the result of a continuous natural disaster that once again has turned upside down the hopes and work that went into planting this spring.

This drought is a disaster—it is been a disaster for agriculture and a disaster for rural communities, which depend so much on agriculture. I think that going home over the August recess certainly gave all of us from States hit by drought even more reason to seek assistance. I do not want to detract from the importance of sending disaster assistance to those in Florida. However, I believe that my colleagues must join me in casting a greater spotlight on the importance of helping our Nation's farmers and ranchers recover from the impacts of the current drought.

Therefore, I would like to join the Senator from South Dakota in calling on the President and the Congress to support funding for drought aid for our farmers and ranchers, and to fully fund the crop and livestock disaster programs so critical to Nebraska's farmers and ranchers.

A drought relief package is of the utmost importance to farmers and ranchers in Nebraska and across all those rural America parts suffering from this natural disaster. It will make the difference between keeping their farms or being forced out of agriculture—to the detriment of all of us who depend on the "breadbasket of the world." We must seek this assistance in order to ensure that our rural communities are not allowed to wither under the worst conditions in over half of a century.

I hope my Senate colleagues will join me in supporting drought assistance this year. Like any other natural disaster, this drought has hurt the very livelihoods of good, hardworking people who struggle every day to stay afloat even under normal conditions. It is imperative that we respond to this crisis in rural America.

I thank my colleagues for this opportunity to address an issue of great importance to my State.

#### PASSAGE OF U.S.-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, recently the Senate passed S. 2610, the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement, which will be implemented by this legislation, will provide many benefits to